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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/886,363	06/21/2001	R. Douglas White	56145473-5	4454

26453 7590 02/08/2007
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EXAMINER

O'CONNOR, GERALD J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	02/08/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/886,363

Applicant(s)

White et al.

Examiner

O'Connor

Art Unit

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE THREE MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on November 16, 2006 (Election).
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 22-29 and 32 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21, 30, and 31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on June 21, 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>20020412</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restriction

1. Applicant's election without traverse of the invention of Group I, claims 1-21, 30, and 31, in the reply filed November 16, 2006 is hereby acknowledged.
2. Claims 22-29 and 32 are hereby withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a non-elected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed November 16, 2006.

Drawings

3. Figure 1 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g).
4. A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 101:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

6. To be considered statutory, claimed subject matter requires four things¹:

(1) the claimed subject matter *must* lie within the ambit of the *four classes* of statutory subject matter enumerated in 35 U.S.C. 101, those being any new and useful *process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter*;

(2) the claimed subject matter *must not* fall within any of the *three categories* of statutory subject matter *exceptions* enumerated by the courts, those being, *in the absence of any practical application: abstract ideas, laws of nature, and natural phenomena*;

(3) any *practical application* of one of the three *otherwise nonstatutory* categories of exceptions *must not preempt* the underlying abstract ideas, laws of nature, or natural phenomena by foreclosing others from *substantially all other practical applications* of the same abstract ideas, laws of nature, or natural phenomena; *and*,

(4) any *practical application* of one of the three *otherwise nonstatutory* categories of exceptions *must* be evidenced in at least one of two possible ways:

(a) by transforming an article or physical object to a different state or thing; or,

(b) by otherwise producing any useful, concrete, and tangible result.

¹ *Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications for Patent Subject Matter Eligibility*, published by order of the Commissioner for Patents, available in pdf format online on the Internet at: http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/preognotice/guidelines101_20051026.pdf.

7. Claims 1-21, 30, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Method claims 1-21, 30, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Method claims 1-21, 30, and 31 fail to satisfy the fourth, and thus the second, requirements for statutory subject matter eligibility because they are considered to be drawn merely to the production and/or manipulation of non-functional descriptive material, effecting no “useful, concrete, and tangible result.” It has been held that such claims, even if the non-functional descriptive material is claimed in combination with a computer-readable medium, are considered to comprise non-statutory subject matter, for merely manipulating an abstract idea. *In re Lowry*, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

Moreover, method claims 1-21, 30, and 31 fail to satisfy the third requirement for statutory subject matter eligibility because they are considered to *preempt* the underlying abstract idea, since they would foreclose others from *substantially all practical applications* of the *same* abstract idea. It has been held that such claims are considered to be unpatentable for comprising non-statutory subject matter. *In re Schrader*, 22 F.3d 290, 295; 30 USPQ2d 1455, 1459 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

8. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article 21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

9. Claims 14, 15, 18-21, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by the admitted prior art, as depicted in Figure 1 and described in the written specification, including the content of Kosiba et al. (US 6,098,052), incorporated therein by reference.

The admitted prior art includes a method for increasing collections from a set of debt comprising: determining a collection model for a set of debt owed by a set of debtors; determining an approximate cost of debt collection; and selecting a compensation package from a plurality of compensation packages (percentage/commission rates) payable to a collection entity for the set of debt in accordance with the approximate cost of debt collection and the collection model of the set of debt.

Regarding claim 15, in the method of the admitted prior art, the selecting a compensation package selects one or more of a fix profit package, a single commission rate package, and a plural commission rate package.

Regarding claim 18, in the method of the admitted prior art, the selecting a compensation package increases an amount of money collected from the set of debt.

Regarding claim 19, in the method of the admitted prior art, the selecting a compensation package substantially maximizes a profitability for an owner of the set of debt.

Regarding claim 20, the method of the admitted prior art further comprises determining a compensation package cost associated with each of the plurality of compensation packages, wherein the selecting a compensation package substantially maximizes amount of money collected from the set of debt less the compensation package cost.

Regarding claim 21, in the method of the admitted prior art, the collection model for a collection entity is implemented on a computer and selecting a compensation package is performed by the computer.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 1-13, 16, 17, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art, as depicted in Figure 1 and described in the written specification, including the content of Kosiba et al. (US 6,098,052), incorporated therein by reference.

The admitted prior art includes a method for increasing collections from a set of debt, as applied above in the rejection of claims 14, 15, 18-21, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a), but the admitted prior art includes selecting only one single percentage/commission rate for any given set of debt, rather than setting multiple percentage/commission rates as claimed. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have modified the method of the admitted prior art so as have set plural commission rates payable to a collection entity for the set of debt, rather than merely setting a given single rate, in order to provide additional incentive to the collection agency to collect the debt, since so doing could be performed readily and easily by any person of ordinary skill in the art, with neither undue experimentation, nor risk of unexpected results, and since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art. *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.*, 193 USPQ 8.

Further details of the dependent claims would all be either inherent in the described combination/modification, or else self-evident or well known, hence obvious, to one of ordinary skill in the art, such that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have made any necessary modifications, merely as a matter of design choice, since so doing could be performed by any person of ordinary skill in the art, with neither undue experimentation, nor risk of unexpected results.

Conclusion

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the disclosure.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication, or earlier communications, should be directed to the examiner, **Jerry O'Connor**, whose telephone number is **(571) 272-6787**, and whose facsimile number is **(571) 273-6787**.

Official replies to this Office action may now be submitted electronically by registered users of the EFS-Web system. Information on EFS-Web tools is available on the Internet at:

<http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/portal/tools.htm>. An EFS-Web Quick-Start Guide is available at:

<http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/portal/efs/quick-start.pdf>.

Alternatively, official replies to this Office action may still be submitted by any **one** of fax, mail, or hand delivery. **Faxed replies should be directed to the central fax at (571) 273-8300**. Mailed replies should be addressed to "Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450." Hand delivered replies should be delivered to the "Customer Service Window, Randolph Building, 401 Dulany Street, Alexandria, VA 22314."

GJOC

February 2, 2007



Gerald J. O'Connor
Primary Examiner
Group Art Unit 3627